

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Action/Discussion Item:

Waiver Request of 704 KAR 3:305, Minimum High School Graduation Requirements from the Franklin County School System

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

704 KAR 3:305

Action Question:

Should the Kentucky Board of Education grant a waiver to the Franklin County Board of Education in order for them to grant a high school diploma to a former student unable to fulfill the current requirements?

History/Background:

Existing Policy. The Kentucky Board of Education has established the minimum high school graduation requirements as twenty-two (22) credits through 704 KAR 3:305. The requirements took effect beginning with the graduating class of 2002. Districts may add additional requirements, but each district's graduation policy must at least meet the minimum established in the regulation. The current credit requirement for high school graduation established by the Franklin County Board of Education is 27.

In August of 2005, the Franklin County Board of Education requested the Kentucky Board of Education to grant a waiver in order for the local Board to award a diploma to a student who dropped out of school in 1966. The student had attained 17 ½ credits prior to dropping out of school in 1966. The Kentucky Board of Education discussed the waiver request at their October 2005 meeting. The discussion included the fact that the student had completed the lacking ½ credit in mathematics through Franklin County Adult Education. She had been misinformed by the district that students need only complete the requirements in place at the time of their original potential graduation, not the requirements in place currently. The local Board's rationale also included the suggestion that the student's "life experiences over the past 39 years" could equate to the 9 credits the student lacks toward the current district requirement of 27 credits. The Kentucky Board of Education denied the waiver with regret but emphasized no way exists to step away from the current requirements for a diploma as set forth by law.

On December 7, 2006, the commissioner's office received a renewed request for this waiver from the Franklin County Board of Education along with correspondence to the local Board from a legislator requesting the waiver on the constituent's behalf (attached).

Staff Recommendation and Rationale:

Staff recommends the Kentucky Board of Education reaffirm its October 2005 decision and deny the waiver. The Kentucky Department of Education does not consider life experiences as a substitute for the requirements for high school graduation as established in 704 KAR 3:305. Granting such a waiver could set a precedent for considering life experiences in lieu of credits for any person not completing the requirements and result in numerous waiver requests. As an alternative to this waiver, the student has the option of pursuing a GED.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

Consistent application of Kentucky's minimum requirements for high school graduation is crucial to the state's continued efforts toward proficiency.

Contact Person:

Starr Lewis, Associate Commissioner
Office of Teaching and Learning
(502) 564-2107
starr.lewis@education.ky.gov

Deputy Commissioner

Interim Commissioner of Education

Date:

February 2007